

Questions for Individual or Groups:

1. Is the answer that “suffering is a part of life” a satisfying answer for you? Why or why not?
2. If we know that God doesn’t always give us what we want, why is suffering still difficult?

Walk through each of the five aspects of a Theology of Suffering.

3. Which of these is most helpful to know? (or most critical for you to know)
4. Which is most comforting?
5. Are there any Biblical truths about suffering that are missing?
6. How can forming a Biblical Theology of suffering when we’re not suffering help us when we are?



The Struggle with Disappointment

The key to responding well is to understand the difference between sympathy and empathy.

Sympathy creates _____.

- It says, “You _____ thing. I’m sorry you have to live with that!”
- We treat people as fragile.

Empathy deepens _____.

- It says, “I haven’t experienced that, but I’ve felt something similar.”

“Rarely can a response make something better, what makes something better is connection.” –Brene Brown

To get to thriving, we need to deal with our _____.

What we're NOT saying:

1. "You should be ashamed of all _____ and dreams."
2. "You should shut off your _____."
3. "Just _____ it!"

We must resist tying our _____ to our outward circumstances.

God doesn't promise us we will always get what we want.

Building a Theology of Suffering

1. Suffering is a _____ part of life.

- "God sends the rain on the just and the unjust." Mt 5:45
- "In this world you will have trouble." John 16:33
- "Do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you..." 1 Peter 4:12-13

2. Suffering plays a critical role in developing _____.

- It can build things like patience and perseverance (Romans 5:3-5)
- It can make us more _____ toward those who are suffering
- _____ learned obedience through suffering (Hebrews 5:7-8)
- In our weakness, we experience the _____ of God. (2 Corinthians 12:1-10)

3. We may never know _____ in this life.

- When Job suffered great tragedy, his friends tried to figure out why.
- God's answer..."Call me when you can create a _____." (paraphrase)

4. We have a _____ who understands what it's like to suffer.

- "We share in the sufferings of Christ..." –2 Corinthians 1:6-7

5. Suffering makes us long for _____.

- "If our hope is only for this life, we are to be pitied more than anyone in the world." –1 Corinthians 15:19
- What we suffer now is nothing compared to the glory that will be revealed in us later." –Romans 8:18
- "He will wipe away every tear from our eyes." –Revelation 21:4

"In all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

–Romans 8:37-39